

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 KABUL 01444 01 OF 02 220504Z  
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01  
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15  
USIA-06 OMB-01 /072 W  
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R 220330Z FEB 78  
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6669  
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI  
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN  
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 KABUL 1444

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E. O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, AF  
SUBJECT: KHURRAM KILLING IS OFFICIALLY TIED TO A LARGER PLOT  
AIMED AT THE PRESIDENT AND OTHER CABINET MEMBERS

REF: KABUL 0205 (NOTOL)

1. SUMMARY: THE RESULTS OF THE AFGHAN JUSTICE MINISTRY'S INVESTIGATION OF LAST NOVEMBER'S MURDER OF PLANNING MINISTER ALI AHMAD KHURRAM WERE RELEASED IN A RADIO ANNOUNCEMENT FEBRUARY 18 FOLLOWED BY STATEMENTS IN THE CONTROLLED PRESS. ACCORDING TO THE AFGHAN GOVERNMENT (GOA), THE ASSASSINATION WAS PART OF A LARGER PLOT WHICH INCLUDED PRESIDENT MOHAMMAD DAOUD AND OTHER MINISTERS AS TARGETS. THE ANNOUNCEMENT STATED FURTHER THAT THE LEADERS OF THIS PLOT, WHO HAVE ALSO BEEN ARRESTED, HAD CONFESSED LINKS WITH THE ULTRA RIGHT-WING IKHWAN-E-MUSLIMIN (MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD), AS WELL AS WITH UNNAMED "FOREIGNERS." THE GOA INDULGED IN SOME  
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 KABUL 01444 01 OF 02 220504Z

SELF-PRAISE REGARDING THE OUTCOME OF THE INVESTIGATION, BUT DID NOT DISCLOSE THE TARGET COUNTRY OF THE POSSIBLY OMINOUS XENOPHOBIC ASPECTS OF THE STATEMENT. END SUMMARY.

2. IN A MINISTRY OF JUSTICE ANNOUNCEMENT FEBRUARY 18, THE GOA RELEASED THE OFFICIAL RESULTS OF ITS INVESTIGATION OF THE MURDER OF PLANNING MINISTER KHURRAM LAST NOVEMBER. ACCORDING TO THE

STATEMENT, KHURRAM'S CONFESSED KILLER, ONE MOHAMMAD MARJON, WAS A MEMBER OF A GROUP OF "REACTIONARIES," SOME OF WHOM WERE MEMBERS OF THE ULTRA RIGHT-WING IKHWAN-E-MUSLIMIN (MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD), AN ILLEGAL AND RADICALLY CONSERVATIVE POLITICAL ORGANIZATION. (SOME INTELLIGENCE SOURCES HAVE HEARD THAT MARJON MIGHT ALSO HAVE BEEN A LEFTIST AT AN EARLIER TIME.) THE GOA CLAIMS THAT MOST OF MARJON'S ACCOMPLICES HAVE BEEN ARRESTED AND HAVE ALSO REPORTEDLY CONFESSED (THE GOA FELT IT NECESSARY TO INCLUDE IN ITS STATEMENT THE ASSURANCES THAT THESE CONFESSIONS WERE VOLUNTARY AND WERE NOT OBTAINED UNDER DURESS).

3. KHURRAM WAS NOT THE SOLE TARGET, ACCORDING TO THE ANNOUNCEMENT, AS THE PLOTTERS WERE ALSO AIMING AT PRESIDENT DAOUD AND SEVERAL OTHER CABINET MEMBERS. FURTHER SUBSTANTIVE DETAILS REGARDING THIS LARGER PLOT AND ITS INTENDED VICTIMS ARE NOT DISCLOSED, OTHER THAN THE TIDBIT THAT KHURRAM WAS SUPPOSED TO HAVE SERVED AS A SHIELD FOR GAINING ACCESS TO DAOUD. OF THE 54 PEOPLE ARRESTED FOLLOWING THE KILLING, 25 HAVE BEEN ACCUSED OF VARIOUS CRIMES, WHILE 29 HAVE REPORTEDLY BEEN RELEASED.

4. A KEY ELEMENT OF THE WHOLE AFFAIR, ACCORDING TO THE STATEMENT, WAS THE ROLE OF UNNAMED "ALIENS" WHO PROVIDED MORAL AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR THE PLOTTERS, AND TRAINING FOR MARJON SOMEWHERE "OUTSIDE AFGHANISTAN." NO FURTHER INFORMATION REGARDING THE IDENTITY OF THESE FOREIGNERS IS REVEALED, BUT THE ANNOUNCEMENT DID ASSERT THAT SOME AFGHAN "IKHWANIS," ALSO CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 KABUL 01444 01 OF 02 220504Z

OUTSIDE AFGHANISTAN, MAINTAINED LINKS WITH FOREIGNERS AND WERE INVOLVED IN THE PLOT.

5. COMMENT: MOST OF THE ELEMENTS OF GOA'S OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT HAD BEEN FORESHADOWED DURING THE PERIOD OF INVESTIGATION SINCE KHURRAM'S KILLING (REFTEL). THE XENOPHOBIC ASPECTS, HOWEVER, ARE NEW, AND PROBABLY HAVE A DUAL POLITICAL MOTIVATION -- ONE EXTERNAL, THE OTHER INTERNAL. THE GOA, UNDOUBTEDLY NOT WANTING TO INFLICT SERIOUS DAMAGE ON ITS BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH ANY SPECIFIC COUNTRY, DID NOT IDENTIFY WHICH FOREIGNERS -- IF ANY -- WERE ACTUALLY INVOLVED, NOR WHERE MARJON WENT FOR HIS "TRAINING." NEVERTHELESS, THE RECENT SURGE OF RIGHT-WING ISLAMIC MOVEMENTS WITHIN AFGHANISTAN'S NEIGHBORING MUSLIM COUNTRIES COULD WELL HAVE PROMPTED THIS UNVEILED GOA WARNING TO THOSE WHO MIGHT BE TEMPTED, TO ANY EXTENT, TO IMPORT "ACTIVIST" RIGHTIST IDEAS INTO THIS COUNTRY.

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PAGE 01 KABUL 01444 02 OF 02 220510Z  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 KABUL 1444

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

6. ON THE DOMESTIC FRONT, THE ANNOUNCEMENT'S ANTI-FOREIGN THEME COULD CONCEIVABLY BE A SMOKE SCREEN TO CONCEAL THE EXTENT OF GENUINE DOMESTIC OPPOSITION, ESPECIALLY THE RADICALLY CONSERVATIVE VARIETY. IN THIS REGARD, THE OVERALL TONE OF THE JUSTICE MINISTRY'S STATEMENT REFLECTS THE POST-KHURRAM GOA ATTITUDE THAT RIGHTIST OPPOSITION OF UNKNOWN STRENGTH DOES INDEED EXIST. BY PLACING RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE KILLING ON THE TRADITIONAL AFGHAN BOGEYMAN (THE FOREIGNER), THE REGIME OBLIQUELY WARNS THIS INTERNAL ELEMENT AS WELL THAT ACTIVIST OPPOSITION IS NOT WELCOME IN AFGHANISTAN. THE RELATIVELY CAUTIOUS APPROACH TO THIS DOMESTIC TARGET, HOWEVER, UNDERSCORES THE PROBABLY LATENT STRENGTH OF RADICAL CONSERVATISM IN THIS COUNTRY, AND PERHAPS REFLECTS THE AUTHORITIES' CONVICTION THAT NOW, AS THROUGHOUT AFGHANISTAN'S HISTORY, THE POTENTIALLY MOST FORMIDABLE OPPOSITION COMES FROM THE FAR RIGHT OF THE AFGHAN POLITICAL SPECTRUM.

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PAGE 02 KABUL 01444 02 OF 02 220510Z

CONFIDENTIAL

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## Message Attributes

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Sheryl P. Walter  
Declassified/Released  
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20 Mar 2014  
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